

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for tracking prescription orders through a pharmacy having a plurality of physically spaced apart locations for filling the prescription order including the following steps:

receiving a plurality of prescription orders from a customer;

tagging the prescription orders with an identifying tag having the same identifier, said identifier is unique to the customer;

manually moving the prescription orders to at least one location within the pharmacy;

detecting the prescription orders at the at least one location by sensing the identifying tag attached to the prescription orders; and,

recording the location of the prescription orders at each location.

2. The method for tracking prescription orders through a pharmacy of claim 1, further including the steps of:

displaying the location of the prescription orders on a computer system display viewable by pharmacy workers, thereby facilitating the easy location of said prescription orders.

3. The method for tracking prescription order through a pharmacy of claim 2, further including displaying the status of said plurality of prescription orders on a customer display viewable by customers.

4. The method for tracking prescription order through a pharmacy of claim 2, wherein said pharmacy is a retail pharmacy.

5. A prescription order tracking system for tracking a plurality of prescription orders from a customer in a retail pharmacy having a first station therein for filling the prescription orders, said tracking system including:

a computer system having a display;

a tag operably secured to the prescription orders and having an identifier, said identifier being unique to the customer; and

a first tag reader positioned near the first station and in communication with said computer system, said first tag reader able to detect the presence of said tag when said tag is in close proximity of said first tag reader and send a first signal to said computer system;

wherein said computer system processes said signal to display the presence of said tag at said first station, thereby displaying the location of said prescription orders.

6. The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, further including:

a second station spaced apart from said first station; and wherein said second station has a second tag reader positioned in communication with said computer system, said second tag reader able to detect the presence of said tag when said tag is in close proximity of said second tag reader and send a second signal to said computer system;

wherein said computer system processes said first signal and said second signal to display the location of said tag at one of said first and second stations, thereby displaying the location of said prescription order.

7. The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, wherein said tag is a bar code, and said tag reader is a bar code scanner.

8. The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, wherein said tag reader locates said tag through electromagnetic interrogation of a spatial region.

9. The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, wherein said tag reader is an electromagnetic field generator, and said tag is an electromagnetic antenna.

10. The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, wherein said tag is a transmitter for transmitting a signal, and said tag reader is able to receive said signal.

11. The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, wherein said tag is detachably secured to said prescription orders.

12. The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, wherein said tag is rigidly secured to said prescription orders.

13. The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, wherein said tag is secured to a carrier for receiving the prescription order therein.

14. The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, further including:

a storage bin having a plurality of cubbies, each said cubby having an individual cubby identifier, and having a cubby tag reader in communication with said computer system, such that the presence of said tag within one of said plurality of cubbies is detectable by that cubby's tag reader and sends a

cubby location signal to said computer system, said cubby location signal including the individual cubby identifier of said one of said plurality of cubbies;

wherein said computer system process said first signal and said cubby location signal to display the location of said tag at one of said first location or said one of said plurality of cubbies.

15. The prescription order tracking system of claim 14, wherein said cubby tag reader is hand-held and manually operated.

16. The prescription order tracking system of claim 14, wherein said computer system determines that a particular prescription order is ready by detecting the presences of said particular prescription order in a cubby, and displays that this order is ready on a customer display viewable by customers.

17. The prescription order tracking system of claim 16, wherein said customer display includes displaying the customer name and prescription order status of at least one said customer.

18. The prescription order tracking system of claim 16, wherein said customer display includes displaying a unique code associated with said customer, thereby preserving the customer's confidentiality.

19. The prescription order tracking system of claim 16, wherein said computer system monitors the average time to file a prescription and uses this information to determine an estimated completion time for a particular prescription order.

20. The prescription order tracking system of claim 19, wherein said estimated completion time is displayed on the customer display and associated with the customer submitting the prescription order.

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